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Articles in Today's Clips

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

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Zeeland man admits to shaking baby in 'fit of rage,' petition states

Posted by [ebriesch](#) September 29, 2008 22:38PM



Scott Crowder

HOLLAND -- A 21-year-old Zeeland area man has admitted to shaking and hitting his 2-month-old son in what police characterized as a "fit of rage" because the infant would not stop crying, a court petition states.

"Scott Crowder struck (the infant) across the head several times because the child was crying and this frustrated him," according to an Ottawa County Family Court petition filed to suspend his visitation rights to his two children.

Crowder's son, Kobi, was in critical condition Monday at DeVos Children's Hospital, three days after he was injured.

The petition alleges Crowder made admissions in an interview with Ottawa County sheriff's Detective Tom Knapp and Child Protective Services investigator Tom Macy.

Police were called to an apartment on South Traditions Way about 8 p.m. Friday on a report of a child in distress.

Police said doctors identified a significant brain injury in the child, and Scott Crowder was arrested Saturday for first-degree felony child abuse.

Crowder, arraigned Monday in 58th District Court in Holland, had been watching the child.

In the petition, police said Crowder admitted to "shaking the child as he was angry that the child would not stop crying. He did this in a fit of rage in which he lost control of his actions."

Court records show a rocky relationship between Crowder and the mother of his children, Jeannette Imkamp, 19.

He was on probation for a December 2007 domestic violence charge.

Imkamp took out a personal-protection order against Crowder in December, claiming he "choked and hit me," threatened to burn her with a cigarette, dumped juice and ashes from an ash tray on her and threatened to kill her.

The protection order was terminated in February, however, and Crowder was allowed to stay with Imkamp months later.

On Monday, Family Court Judge Mark Feyen ordered the couple's two children, Kobi and Madeline, 15 months, to remain with their mother. The petition against Crowder also seeks to terminate his parental rights.

Crowder is being held in the Ottawa County Jail without bond pending a hearing for violating his probation. A \$10,000 bond was set on the child abuse charge.

If convicted on the charge, Crowder faces up to 15 years in prison.



September 30, 2008

Across the nation

LUSBY, MD.: Girls' remains in freezer

A mother told police that human remains uncovered in her basement freezer were those of her two adopted daughters.

Police were investigating an abuse complaint Saturday when they discovered the remains encased in ice. So far, the woman is charged with first-degree child abuse in the beating of her runaway 7-year-old, who was found wandering in the neighborhood wearing only a blood- and feces-soaked T-shirt. The girl escaped from a locked bedroom by jumping out a second-story window. The woman admitted beating the girl with a "hard-heeled shoe," officials said. It is not clear how the other children might have died.



Ypsilanti woman admits she tried to suffocate her baby

Posted by Art Aisner | The Ann Arbor News September 29, 2008 20:16PM

An Ypsilanti woman pleaded guilty to attempted murder charges for trying to suffocate her infant daughter while the baby was receiving treatment at the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, officials said.

April Palmer, 19, entered a plea in Washtenaw County Circuit Court to one count of attempted murder. She faces up to life in prison at her sentencing Oct. 28, court records show. Prosecutors agreed to drop child abuse charges as part of the deal.

Palmer was arrested in June after she was seen covering the baby's head with a pillow in a hospital room, police said. The 2-month-old girl had been placed under observation at the hospital after Palmer brought her in with suspicious injuries about 10 days earlier.

Past coverage:

- [Young mother accused of trying to suffocate baby at University of Michigan hospital](#)

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Print Page

Residents to have more access to fresh, local food

Tuesday, September 30, 2008 10:30 AM EDT

EAST LANSING - Even more Michigan residents will have access to fresh, local food at farmers markets, thanks to the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) who just received a USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program grant to continue its work with accepting Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) at farmers markets.

The USDA recently announced 85 grants totaling more than \$3.4 million directed by the new farm bill to spread the use of farmers markets, and 18 of the 85 grants promote EBT to help low-income consumers buy locally-grown fresh fruits and vegetables. Michigan Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS), the host organization for MIFMA operations, received \$44,725 to improve low-income consumers' access to and utilization of farmers markets and to expand the customer base and enhance sales volume of Michigan farmers who sell at markets.

"Our vision is to place farmers markets at the forefront of the local food movement and ensure all residents have access to healthy, locally grown food," said Dru Montri, MIFMA Project Manager. "This grant will help us get more fresh fruits and vegetables to the residents and families who need it most by helping more farmers markets and local vendors accept food stamps and offer EBT at their markets."

This project, which will run from October 2008 to December 2009, will address the critical issue of market access for low-income households, children and seniors through a statewide working group partnership and will develop consumer education strategies for nutrition, food preparation and new products at the Michigan farmers markets that currently accept food stamps.

In 2006, only three of Michigan's 150 farmers markets were authorized and equipped to accept Bridge Cards, but through MIFMA's work in 2007, 11 markets got on board with EBT. This summer, 18 of the more than 160 farmers markets were accepting Bridge Cards, and with this project, that number will only go up.

Because of this work and dedication to Michigan farmers, markets and families, MIFMA and its partnering organizations were awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the USDA in February 2008 to recognize these efforts to increase the number of farmers markets serving Michigan Bridge Card clients.

"Today, more than \$1.3 billion in federal food assistance benefits are spent annually," said Montri.

This growth represents both a need and an opportunity, she said. Michigan farmers markets need to increase their accessibility to low-income individuals through the acceptance of alternative purchasing methods.

The Clark family is excited to host the grand opening of their new Roseland Organic Market, on Dailey Road, four miles south of Dowagiac, Saturday, Oct. 11. Shown are Merrill Clark with her son, Lincoln, his wife, Shelly and their children, Emily, Landon and Gracie along with their helper, Buddy.

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Editorial: Lifeline to poor needs our support

Hillsdale Daily News

Posted Sep 29, 2008 @ 05:10 PM

The welfare of our communities and their residents depend on helping agencies supported by giving people.

A few days ago, we reported on such an agency: Lifeline, an organization working quietly to feed the hungry in the southwest County.

Reporter Amy Bell told us the Camden-based food pantry was formed in 2006 by several area churches whose pastors saw individual congregations could meet amid a declining economy and dwindling jobs.

Lifeline's sponsorship grew to include 11 churches: Reading Nazarene, United Methodist churches in Reading, Frontier, Ca Montgomery, Stokes Chapel, Montgomery United Baptist, New Hope Church, Camden Missionary and Frontier Baptist. The swath from Reading through Camden to Frontier and Osseo.

Lifeline depends on help from a wider area: Groceries costing \$400-\$500 a week come from the Food Bank of South Central. Produce comes from area farmers.

Lifeline also receives contributions of meat from Bob Evans via Hillsdale's King's Kupboard pantry.

However quietly Lifeline functions, it's certainly known to the Hillsdale County Community Foundation, which has provided fi

Recipients are permitted to fill up a bag with canned goods at the once a week distribution. It serves 35-45 people on those growing at the end of the month when other food assistance is running out, as weather grows colder and as the economy fa Volunteer Mariam Driver said 51 people showed up at the last distribution. "More and more people are out of work." Most re said. The men hang back.

Recipients can pick up more than foodstuffs. For \$1, they can also buy a bag of clothing and other household items at Lifeline New Hope School at 5051 West Montgomery Road near Camden-Frontier schools.

The requirements for recipients, set by the state, are light: Recipients must fill out an application and show a driver's license

Could Lifeline serve more people?

Yes, says Driver. And it can use more donations, of cash or clothing, to meet increasing demands.

Hillsdale County's communities are held together by more than their public institutions -- the township, village and city government, fire departments and libraries.

They're also held together, supported, by an imperfect net of churches, service and fraternal organizations, and by helping organizations like Lifeline, whose participants give so much of their time, energy and cash -- and miles on the car. At today's gas prices, don't

The net doesn't always work. People sometimes fall through.

But we can't imagine being without Lifeline and all of the organizations and individuals so willing to help so many others.

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Agencies will turn away people seeking relief from heating shut-off notices

Posted by Corey Mitchell | The Saginaw News and Dave Eggers | The Associated Press September 30, 2008 08:59AM

The calls come in by the dozens each day to the Salvation Army of Saginaw.

Families with shut-off notices seeking help to pay their utilities

With state regulators expecting the cost of natural gas to rise 25 percent, Michigan residents on average will pay nearly \$200 a month to heat their homes with natural gas this winter, local assistance agencies are in a tight spot.

With no funds nor relief in sight, workers at the Salvation Army are turning away residents, said Mirtha Campos, social services director.

"It's not like we can find another place to help them out," Campos said. "Hopefully before it gets to cold, we'll get some funding."

RELATED CONTENT

- For tips to cut your winter energy bill, go online to: michigan.gov/bewinterwise

The Salvation Army serves thousands of families per year, taking calls and hearing pleas whether there's money available or not.

"We are running low, as everyone else is," said Maj. Wayne Ruston. "Saginaw is one of the hardest hit areas."

State regulators, who released their projections Monday, blamed higher heating costs on the increased price of crude oil. They said Michigan will fare better than other states because it stores cheaper natural gas underground.

"Despite this, a dramatic (price) increase is headed our way," Michigan Public Service Commission Chairman Orjiakor Isiogu said.

About eight in 10 Michigan homes use natural gas.

The average residential heating bill will jump to \$193 a month if the weather is as cold as normal, a \$39 increase from last winter's \$154 average. Temperatures are expected to continue the warming trend from the last five heating seasons, sparing customers a bit.

Either way, bills will jump 21 percent to 25 percent higher at a time people grapple with higher food and gasoline prices along with the state's poor economy.

The price of home heating oil is up 13 percent; propane is 3 percent higher. Last year, the Saginaw County Department of Human Services aided more than 8,000 families with utility shut off notices. The agency turned hundreds more away, Director Randy Barst said.

"The heating costs are scary for people working with good jobs," Barst said. "It's significantly more of a challenge for people who are poor."

Many are people who rent homes that are poorly insulated, further driving up their bills. Families bring in shut off notices daily, some showing them thousands in arrears, Barst said.

The agency caps assistance at \$300 per family.

"That doesn't go very far," Barst said.

Workers handed out all their emergency utility assistance money in June and had to seek aid from other counties that hadn't used their allotment.

Today, a public service commissioner was to announce a campaign to help customers cut power bills by switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs. About 500,000 such bulbs are available starting Wednesday at big discounts -- \$1 apiece -- at Kroger, Meijer and Menard stores.

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September 30, 2008

Heat bills may rise up to 25 percent

Price of crude oil cited as reason for winter hike

David Eggert
Associated Press

Michigan residents on average will pay nearly \$200 a month to heat their homes with natural gas this winter, an increase of up to 25 percent depending on how cold it gets.

State regulators, who released their projections Monday, blamed higher heating costs on the increased price of crude oil. They said Michigan will fare better than other states because it stores cheaper natural gas in underground tanks.

"Despite this, a dramatic (price) increase is headed our way," Michigan Public Service Commission Chairman Orjiakor Isiogu said.

About eight in ten Michigan homes use natural gas.

The average residential heating bill will be \$193 a month if the weather is as cold as normal, a \$39 increase from last winter's \$154 average. Customers may be spared a bit because temperatures are expected to be warmer, a continuing trend over the past five heating seasons.

Either way, bills will be 21 percent to 25 percent higher at a time people are grappling with higher food and gasoline prices along with the state's poor economy.

The price of home heating oil is up 13 percent; propane is 3 percent higher.

The Salvation Army has spent more this calendar year than last year to help Lansing-area households with their utility bills, and there are still three months left in 2008. Statewide, the charity has had to deny 6,000 people assistance with heating and electric bills because of a lack of funding.

Families need help

"We're finding many young families coming to us for the very first time," said Major Robert Scott, commander of the Lansing branch.

Isiogu urged customers to weatherize their homes and turn down the thermostat at times. Other suggestions included contacting utilities immediately if customers have trouble paying bills, exploring utilities' budget payment plans and applying for financial assistance from the government and charities to avoid shutoffs.

Low-income residents, for example, can avoid losing electricity or heat if they pay at least 7 percent of their estimated annual bill each month from November through March. Seniors participating in the Winter Protection Plan do not have to make specific monthly payments but are encouraged to do so to avoid higher bills the rest of the year.

Poor urged to apply

Isiogu also urged the poor to apply for the state earned income tax credit and a home heating credit.

Higher heating costs will come at a time utilities are shutting off more power or natural gas because of unpaid bills.

The number of electric shutoffs were up 39 percent, to 73,733, through June compared to the same period last year. Natural gas shutoffs were up 7 percent, to 67,406.

The Public Service Commission, which regulates many of Michigan's utilities, launched a Web site on Monday aimed at helping customers cut winter energy bills and find financial aid.



September 30, 2008

Michigan heating bills to soar

Natural gas projected to climb 25%

*BY DAWSON BELL and SUZETTE HACKNEY
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS*

LANSING -- Michigan residents will pay more to stay warm this winter as the cost of home heating fuel, especially natural gas, was projected Monday to rise sharply in the 2008-09 season.

Natural-gas costs are projected to rise 21% to 25%, according to figures compiled by the Michigan Public Service Commission from U.S. Department of Energy data.

Customers who use heating oil (up 13%) and propane gas (up 3%) also will feel the pinch, the commission said.

The average residential heating bill statewide will rise to \$193 per month this winter, the commission estimates.

Actual 2008-09 rates haven't been set yet, however, and could vary depending on weather and other factors, said MPSC spokeswoman Judy Palnau.

"If there's ever been a time to take a look at the windows and doors and insulation in your home, this is it," she said.

Officials with Michigan's two largest gas suppliers, Consumers Energy and MichCon, said prices are based on the cost they pay for natural gas. Much of the natural gas purchased for consumption this winter was bought by the utilities earlier this summer when prices were lower, state and company officials said.

"The only thing that is driving this increase is the cost of natural gas -- we don't make a profit from it," said John Austerberry, spokesman for DTE Energy, parent company of MichCon.

Austerberry said MichCon's 1.3 million residential customers paid an average of \$175 per month to heat their homes with natural gas last year. That bill is expected to jump to \$210 a month this winter.

Consumers Energy's 1.6 million households probably won't experience as sharp an increase, said company spokesman Jeff Holyfield.

Consumers' customers last winter paid an average of about \$150 a month, Holyfield said. In October, they will pay an average \$159. Prices for the rest of the winter have not yet been set.

"To be honest, I think it's disgusting," Redford Township resident Pat Murtagh, 53, said of the projected increases.

"As an American I just can't believe that people aren't taken care of," he said. "It just seems the poor are being shot to the curb and the middle class is being crushed by things like the cost of heating oil and gasoline."

Assistance is available to help strapped homeowners with their heating costs, the utilities said, including various monthly payment plans as well as direct and indirect assistance. Of MichCon's 1.3 million customers, 113,000 are on payment plans that offer shutoff protection.

An additional 84,000 customers participate in MichCon's BudgetWise billing program, which evenly distributes energy bill payments so customers are paying the same amount each month based on their previous year's usage.

Consumers Energy has a similar program, and also provides \$1.5 million a year in grant money that is administered through the Salvation Army.

Poor and elderly people also are eligible for a variety of government and nonprofit heating assistance programs.

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September 30, 2008

Economic slump finds more people on Medicaid

Downturn challenges states to help uninsured, report finds

BY PATRICIA ANSTETT
FREE PRESS MEDICAL WRITER

The nation's slumping economy is triggering growing Medicaid enrollment, a challenge to states like Michigan as they serve more uninsured people, state and national Medicaid experts said Monday.

"If the downturn is prolonged, and it contributes to large increases in Medicaid enrollment and spending, then this state and every other one will have to look at options to rein in spending," said Vern Smith, Michigan's former Medicaid director and coauthor of a report released Monday by the Kaiser Family Foundation on Medicaid spending.

Across the country, as more people lost health insurance, Medicaid enrollment grew 2.1% in the 2008 fiscal year, which ends today. Michigan's Medicaid enrollment jumped 3.7%.

It begins the 2009 fiscal year with 1.58 million recipients, more than 1 in every 10 residents, up from 1 million in fiscal 1999.

Paul Reinhart, Michigan's current Medicaid director, said that the state has been able to add more people to the program because it levies a hospital provider tax that generated \$4 million in extra federal funding.

The state expects to finish fiscal 2009 with a small surplus in the project, compared with two-thirds of states projecting budget shortfalls, the Kaiser report predicts.

The eighth annual report, based on surveys of all 50 state Medicaid directors, is available at www.kff.org.v

Contact **PATRICIA ANSTETT** at 313-222-5021 or panstett@freepress.com.



Walgreen settles Medicaid case for \$9.9 million

By MARLEY SEAMAN – 16 hours ago

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. Department of Justice said Monday that drugstore operator Walgreen Co. paid \$9.9 million to settle whistleblower allegations that it overcharged the Medicaid programs in Minnesota, Michigan, Florida and Massachusetts.

In those four states, Deerfield, Ill.-based Walgreen is limited to billing Medicaid for the copay amount when the beneficiary also holds private insurance. In some cases, Walgreen billed more than that amount, the Justice Department said.

Walgreen did not immediately return calls seeking comment. The Department of Justice did not say in its statement whether Walgreen acknowledged any wrongdoing in the settlement. The extent of the alleged overcharging was also unknown.

"In a False Claims Act case, the government can collect up to three times the amount of the fraud," said department spokesman Charles Miller, implying a maximum overcharge of about \$3.3 million.

The payments were made to the four states and to the U.S. Walgreen pharmacists Daniel Bieurance and Neil Thompson, who reported the overcharging, will divide approximately \$1.4 million of the award.

Walgreen shares declined in afternoon trading after a financial sector bailout bill was defeated in the House of Representative, which sent stocks sharply lower. Walgreen also reported disappointing fiscal fourth-quarter results before Monday's trading began.

The stock shed \$1.77, or 5.3 percent, to \$30.96, and reached a low of \$30.26. They last traded at that price on Sept. 30, 2003.

StarTribune.com | MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

2 Twin Cities pharmacists blow whistle on Walgreens' Medicaid billing

By **PAUL WALSH**, Star Tribune

September 29, 2008

Walgreens has paid the United States and Minnesota and three other states nearly \$10 million to resolve allegations of falsely billing Medicaid, the U.S. Justice Department announced Monday, with some of that money going to two Twin Cities pharmacists who turned in the industry giant.

The United States initiated the investigation in response to a lawsuit brought by pharmacists Daniel Bieurance and Neil Thompson.

As a result of the settlement, the pharmacists will divide \$1.44 million out of the \$9.9 million recovery. An attorney for the pharmacists said that Thompson still works part time for Walgreens on Hiawatha Avenue in south Minneapolis; Bieurance left Walgreens for another job in pharmacy. Thompson also has a law practice in Minneapolis.

Under the False Claims Act, private individuals can bring such actions for fraud on behalf of the federal government and collect a share of any proceeds recovered. Under state False Claims Acts, private individuals can also bring actions for fraud on behalf of those states and receive a share of the proceeds.

Illinois-based Walgreens charged Minnesota, Florida, Michigan and Massachusetts as if some Medicaid recipients were uninsured, the Justice Department said, when those members were actually covered by Medicaid and by private insurance. The department said Walgreen was entitled to a copay, but instead, charged the difference between what the insurance companies paid for the drugs and what the Medicaid programs would have paid if the recipients were uninsured.

At times, it is cheaper for the Medicaid program to avoid the full costs of medical care for a recipient by paying that person's private insurance premiums and copays. Typically, that is the case for someone with insurance who has a critical illness or accident, can no longer work and cannot afford to keep paying for insurance.

As a result of this improper billing, Walgreens received reimbursement amounts from the states' Medicaid programs that were higher than it was entitled to receive.

Walgreens spokesman Michael Polzin blamed the problem on "inadvertent billing errors" because of a "unique requirement for Medicaid billing when Medicaid is a secondary insurer."

According to the Justice Department, after the two pharmacists receive their share, the state of Minnesota will receive nearly \$1.47 million in the settlement.

A lawyer for the two pharmacists said the men were willing to speak publicly about their action only with an attorney present, and that could not be arranged on Monday.

Health coverage in America: understanding the issues and proposed solutions

www.NewsBlaze.com

DETROIT, Sept. 29 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/-- Michigan's health care systems are struggling with unprecedented numbers of uninsured patients and levels of uncompensated care. At 8.9 percent, Michigan has the highest rate of unemployment in the nation (1). With these sobering facts as a backdrop, national health care leaders will test the feasibility of Senator McCain's and Senator Obama's health care proposals at a special Health Summit on the Uninsured entitled Health Coverage in America: Understanding the Issues and Proposed Solutions to be held Thursday, October 9 from 6:00 - 8:00 PM at The Detroit Marriott Hotel. The Health Summit is being presented by The Michigan Cover the Uninsured Network. Speakers include:

- Henry J. Aaron, senior fellow, Brookings Institution. Aaron, a national health care policy expert will present an analysis of the pros and cons of the candidates' proposals.
- Nancy Schlichting, Chair, Michigan Health & Hospital Association and President & CEO, Henry Ford Health System.
- Marianne Udow-Phillips, Director, Center for Healthcare Research & Transformation, Ann Arbor.
- John J.H. Schwarz, M.D., Physician and former U.S. Congressman.
- Ron Dzwonkowski, Moderator, Editorial Page Editor, Detroit Free Press.

"Health care now ranks fourth (2) in importance to U.S. voters behind the economy, the situation in Iraq and energy," says Nancy Schlichting. "The strength of the economy and energy are inextricably linked to the nation's health care crisis. We need a national solution. With more than 1 million people uninsured in Michigan and 46 million nationwide, we can ill afford not to make access to affordable health care a priority issue as voters go the polls this November."

Being uninsured is a business issue. Employees without health insurance have more sick days and are less productive. When people are unemployed, they quickly lose their options for affordable preventative care and costly emergency room visits increase according to Schlichting.

"Employers who are able to provide health care benefits face increasing costs. Relying on employer-sponsored health care is making the U.S. non-competitive globally," says Schlichting. "The Michigan Health & Hospital Association reported that Michigan's nonprofit hospitals provided an unprecedented \$2.6 billion in unreimbursed care in 2007(3). This safety net is not sustainable. Until we face the reality that health care is broken, we will continue in a downward spiral that will destroy the nation's health care system. Our next president must make a national solution to health care his number one priority."

More than 250 leaders from business, health care and the non-profit community are expected to attend the Health Summit on the Uninsured presented by the Michigan Cover the Uninsured Network. Sponsors include: National American Arab Nurses Association, Michigan Health & Hospital Association, Michigan State Medical Society, Michigan Business & Professional Association, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Michigan Association of Health Plans, Health Alliance Plan, Divided We Fail, Molina Healthcare, Detroit Regional Chamber, United Way for Southeastern Michigan, Henry Ford Health System, University of Michigan Health System, DMC Children's Hospital of Michigan, Trinity Health, Beaumont Hospitals, Oakwood Healthcare, St. John Health and Michigan AFL-CIO.

There is no charge for the event but reservations are required. To register, call 313 874-7178 or contact Naomi Ruth at nruth@hfhs.org

For information and to join the Michigan Cover the Uninsured Network visit <http://www.mctun.org>

1. Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, August 2008
2. Source: Aug. 21-23, USA Today/Gallup Poll
3. Michigan Health & Hospital Association, MHA 2008 Hospital Community Benefits Report. The \$2.6 billion in unreimbursed care included \$209 million in charity care, more than \$605 million in bad debt and more than 1.2 billion in unreimbursed cost of health care services funded by Medicare, Medicaid and other government programs.



September 30, 2008

Make health care costs part of economic cure

BY MARIANNE UDOW-PHILLIPS

The way we finance health care is a fundamental economic issue and critical to consider in the presidential election.

Recent polls say voters are now more focused on the economy than on health care, but it is unwise to separate the two issues, implying that one could be "fixed" without reforming the other.

At more than \$2 trillion, health care spending now accounts for more than 16% of the U.S. gross domestic product. In 2006, health care costs in the United States, at more than \$7,000 per capita, were the highest in the developed world. Yet despite that level of spending, more than 45 million people in this country are uninsured; more than one million in Michigan. That's 10% of our state's population and more than 15% of those aged 18-64.

When we talk about our health care system and the uninsured, we often talk about them in philosophical or even moral terms. But for the moment, let's set aside personal beliefs about the kind of society we want and just focus on why this issue should be important to business.

- First, the lack of health insurance reduces productivity, within the workforce and in the broader context of our national economy. Research tells us that people without health insurance have more health problems than do people with coverage. When people are not able to work to full capacity, business suffers -- and our tax burden increases as we care for those who cannot participate in the labor force.
- Second, high numbers of uninsured cause financial instability in our health system. Those who are uninsured -- or underinsured -- tend to seek care only when their situations become dire, often ending up in hospital emergency rooms. In Michigan, as elsewhere, this is reflected in the increased rate of uncompensated care assumed by hospitals, physicians and other providers. The rapid growth of this cost destabilizes the entire health system and limits the availability of care for all, even those with insurance. It also threatens the solvency of health care providers, often major employers in their communities.
- Third, health insurance is an issue of global competitiveness. As auto companies can attest, many of our competitors are headquartered in countries that provide universal coverage. In the United States, most health insurance for those under 65 is funded through employment. U.S. auto manufacturers estimate that \$1,500 of the cost of every car is related to health care benefits. This cost significantly affects the ability of U.S. companies to compete in the global market.

While many states are attempting to expand health coverage, no national employer should be expected to manage 50 separate solutions. It is clear that we cannot significantly improve our country's economy without addressing the issue of health care at the federal level.

On Oct. 9, the Michigan Cover the Uninsured Network is sponsoring a Health Summit on the Uninsured and a discussion of the major presidential candidate's plans for health coverage. Later that month, the Center for Health Care Research and Transformation will release a report on health coverage in Michigan.

I urge you to become as informed as possible in these weeks before the election, and to urge our new president and Congress to tackle this issue. Nothing less than our future depends on it.

MARIANNE UDOW-PHILLIPS is the director of the Center for Health Care Research &

Transformation, formed by the University of Michigan and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan to promote evidence-based medicine, improve health and achieve universal access to care. The Health Summit for the Uninsured will be held on Thursday, Oct. 9, 6-8 p.m. at the Detroit Marriott. The event is free but reservations are required. To register, call 313 874-7178 or contact Naomi Ruth at nruth@hfhs.org.

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Lectures address poverty and professional ethics

Sept. 30, 2008

KALAMAZOO--The ethical issues pertaining to poverty and contemporary professional ethics will be explored this week as Western Michigan University's Center for the Study of Ethics in Society kicks off its fall series with talks on Thursday and Friday, Oct. 2 and 3.

Thursday's talk will feature Daniel Pellegrum, president of Pathfinder International, who will address "Population, Poverty and the Decisions We Make Right Now" starting at 7 p.m. in Room 3508 Knauss Hall.

Pellegrum earned his bachelor's degree from WMU in 1966 and is back to take part in the University's recognition of Distinguished Alumni. Since graduation, Pellegrum has been ordained in the United Presbyterian Church, served in management positions for Planned Parenthood and co-authored "The Population Activist's Handbook."

Pellegrum serves as president of Pathfinder International. Pathfinder International is a leading international family planning organization with a mission to increase the number of individuals who have access to, and voluntarily use, quality family planning and reproductive health information and services.

Pellegrum has led organizations in times of political opposition and on three separate occasions has led his organization into litigation against the U.S. government. He serves on the board for World Neighbors and is the immediate past board chair of the Brush Foundation and InterAction. Among other publications he has written pieces for The Boston Globe, The Baltimore Sun and The New York Times. He also provides testimony at Congressional hearings and at other public forums.

Friday's presentation is by Dr. Luis Gonzalez, whose talk is titled "The Tangled Web of Contemporary Professional Ethics" and begins at 1 p.m. in Room 1115 of Moore Hall.

Gonzalez earned his master's in philosophy from WMU in 1994 and, like Pellegrum, is back to take part in the University's recognition of Distinguished Alumni.

Over the course of the past two decades, Gonzalez has been a philosopher while also serving as an attorney, a professor, an Air Force captain and a minister. Since 2002, he has been on the faculty of Sinclair Community College, where he serves as associate professor of philosophy.

Gonzalez returns to WMU to share the life and professional experiences that have entangled him in the interdisciplinary web of professional ethics.

His presentation will focus on the experiences that highlight the practical

complexities of contemporary professional ethics, conflicts and resolutions and the importance of the "outsider."

Center for the Study of Ethics in Society
Fall 2008 Lecture Series

Thursday, Oct. 2, 7 p.m.--Daniel Pellegrin, president of Pathfinder International, 3508 Knauss Hall, "Population, Poverty and the Decisions We Make Right Now."

Friday, Oct. 3, 1 p.m.--Dr. Luis Gonzalez, associate professor of philosophy, Sinclair Community College, 1115 Moore Hall, "The Tangled Web of Contemporary Professional Ethics."

Thursday, Oct. 16, 7 p.m.--Jeff Halper, co-founder of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 16, 1035 Fetzer Center, "An Israeli in Palestine: Resisting Dispossession, Redeeming Israel," which is the 2008 Winnie Veenstra Peace Lecture.

Thursday, Oct. 23, 7 p.m.--Dr. John Corvino, associate professor of philosophy, Wayne State University, Fetzer Center, "What's Morally Wrong with Homosexuality?"

Thursday, Oct. 30, 4 p.m.--Dr. Chris Buford, professor of philosophy, University of Akron, 210 Bernhard Center, "Advancing an Advance Directive Debate."

Wednesday, Nov. 5, 7:30 p.m.--Dr. Ronald Kramer, WMU professor of sociology, 210 Bernhard Center, "From Guernica to Baghdad: The Normalization of State Terrorism."

Friday, Dec. 5, 5:15 p.m.--Dr. John Doris, professor of philosophy, Washington University, St. Louis, location and title to be announced.

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Prayer service in Bronson Park focuses on poverty, immigration reform

Posted by Jef Rietsma | Special to the Kalamazoo Gazette September 29, 2008 13:30PM

KALAMAZOO -- An annual tradition may have been born Sunday at Bronson Park, where nearly 100 people gathered for a prayer service that focused on poverty and immigration reform.

Most of the two-hour program centered on prayer, but music, singing and spontaneous dancing added a festive and energetic touch to the event.

"It went over well enough that I think we have enough momentum to try staging a second annual in 2009," said Jordan Bruxvoort, associate organizer for the Michigan Organizing Project. The Kalamazoo-based MOP is a faith- and community-based organization that advocates for immigrants and people who are homeless.

Bruxvoort said he was pleased to see such a diverse and spirited group of people.

The event featured a number of area ministers and representatives from community-advocate groups, including Lori Anne Tennison, a community organizer for the Kalamazoo Homeless Action Network. Tennison, 43, said she was previously homeless and benefited from the services provided by the agency.

Michigan Organizing Project introduced her to faith and, Tennison said, her life has never been the same since. "This was my first letter to God," she said, showing a copy of a poem she wrote and read early during Sunday's ceremony.

"I wrote this knowing I bring a different perspective because I was able to overcome homelessness, and now I am working to help the people (who are) in a position that I once was."

The lineup of those who offered prayers included Pastor Doug Vernon from the First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo City Commissioner Stephanie Moore, Alberto Balboa from Kalamazoo's Iglesia Evangelica Misionera Yo Soy, Father Mike Hazard from St. Joseph's Catholic Church of Kalamazoo and Pastor Mike Stewart from Galilee Baptist Church.

Also featured were two visiting pastors from Uganda, Robert Kagumba and Albert Udongo. Their prayers for peace in Africa and worldwide were warmly received by the audience.

Josh Arnold, a 20-year-old Kalamazoo resident, said he learned from attending that there is a lot of religious oppression worldwide and he hoped events such as Sunday's prayer service would help lead to a world where religion is not a source of hatred or war.

"We're all people of god, no matter what country we're from or what religion we practice," he said.

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